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The Prince Albert Branch.

A short time ago THE COMMERCIAL chronicled the opening of the first railway to the great Saskatchewan country. This was accomplished by the extension of the old Regina and Long Lake Railway, now known as the Prince Albert branch of the Canadian Pacific, to Prince Albert. A section of the Regina and Long Lake railway was completed and operated to some extent in the year 1886. At that time about twenty miles of the railway extending northward from Regina were completed. Since 1886 nothing further was done with the road, and the portion completed was not kept in condition for operating. At the meeting of Parliament in the winter of 1888-89 a subsidy of \$50,000 per year was granted the road with the object of securing its immediate extension to Prince Albert, that this important settlement might be opened to communication with the outside world. This had the desired effect. The road passed under new control and in the summer of 1889 the work of building the road was pushed vigorously and completed beyond Saskatoon before winter set in. Work was resumed last spring and this fall Prince Albert was reached.

The road is now operated as a branch of the Canadian Pacific, and connection is made with the main line at Regina. Trains leave the latter place twice a week—Mondays and Thursdays—for Prince Albert, at seven o'clock in the morning. The length of the road is 247 miles, and the time is fourteen hours. This may be considered somewhat slow travelling, but it is fast in comparison with the seven days formerly consumed in making the trip by stage to Prince Albert, to say nothing of the discomforts of such a long trip in winter weather in an open stage. For a new road the track appears to be in good condition, and much better time could be made, but traffic is not yet heavy enough to warrant the placing of an express

train on the line. The present service is a mixed train.

Leaving Regina the road runs through an open, level prairie region until the valley of Boggy creek is reached. This creek is followed down a sharp grade to the valley of the Qu'Appelle river, which is crossed and a somewhat toilsome ascent made to the level prairie on the opposite side. The descent to and ascent out of the Qu'Appelle valley is the only portion of the line where anything in the nature of a heavy grade is encountered. After the Qu'Appelle is crossed there is a run for a considerable length of time through a poor country. The soil is light, with frequent gravel beds and strips of stony land. The light sod indicates poor soil. The country improves further on, and toward Saskatoon bluffs of poplar trees appear scattered over the prairie, while the heavier growth of grass indicates much better soil. The country is furrowed by the paths left by the buffalo which formerly roamed over the plain in immense herds. At every railway siding along the road tons upon tons of buffalo bones are piled up. These bones have been gathered up from the prairie and hauled to the railway for shipment to distant markets, where they will be ground up for fertilizers. A few years ago these noble animals were being slaughtered in thousands for their hides alone, while the carcasses was allowed to rot on the prairie. Now their bleached bones have a sufficient commercial value to render it profitable to gather them up for shipment. The immense piles of bones at every siding will convey some idea of the vast numbers of buffalo which formerly inhabited the region.

After the Qu'Appelle valley is passed, about twenty miles out from Regina, little or no sign of settlement is observed until Saskatoon is reached, 160 miles from Regina. Here a settlement was established in 1882. Known as the Temperance Colony. On account of the distance from a railway, this settlement has not more

than held its own since it was established. Saskatoon is the town of the settlement. It is located on the South Saskatchewan river. The railway crosses the river a short distance from the village, on a substantial wooden bridge, the timbers for which were cut on the Pacific coast. The railway depot has been established on the opposite side of the river from the village, and a new town will no doubt grow up around the depot. Some buildings have already been started near the station, and in time those in business on the other side of the river will likely move over, as it is understood the railway company and the colonization company have united to establish a town surrounding the railway station. The settlement numbers about 300 persons in all. The town is composed of the following business places: Leslie & Smith, general store; F. ed. Davison, general store; Mrs. Fletcher, general store; Geo. Smith, hardware; W. D. McDonald, drugs; J. Dulmage, tin shop; Geo. Garison, hotel; J. F. Williard, blacksmith; Geo. Hilliard, carpenter, Alex. Marr, mason, etc. Mrs. McCaskill keeps the dining hall at the depot.

Fifty miles north of Saskatoon Duck Lake is reached. Here the first shot was fired in the half-breed rebellion of 1885, and in the fight which followed a number of police and citizens of Prince Albert were killed. The half-breed settlement extends along the South Saskatchewan river, commencing some distance below Saskatoon. Between Saskatoon and Duck Lake the country along the railway is mostly open prairie. The soil is good and there is a fairly heavy growth of grass. There is a lake of considerable size near the station, which gives the name to the place. Duck Lake is situated about midway between the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan river, and the course of the railway is through the country lying between the forks of the river. Duck Lake station is about half a mile from the old town of Duck Lake, where a store or trading